



Role and Impact of Mid-Day Meal Programme in Elementary Education: A Study of Two Districts in Bihar

KEYWORDS

MDM in Elementary Education, MDM in SSA, Role and Impact of MDM.

Dr. R. C. Tyagi

Tarannum Siddiqui

Asst. Professor, Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow

Ph. D. Scholar and Research Assistant Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow

ABSTRACT *This paper is based on the study provided by MHRD New Delhi and conducted in Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow. Mid-day Meal is being implemented with the joint efforts of the government of India and state government of Bihar. The present Mid-day-Meal (MDM) Programme covers all the primary and upper primary schools of the state. The state government has constituted a Mid-day Meal Authority since October, 2006 for the effective implementation of the programme. Under the scheme, boys and girls are provided tasty cooked food during the interval. A total number of 38 primary and 31 upper primary schools were randomly selected for the study in Muzaffarpur and Sheikhpura districts of Bihar as decided by the Ministry. Paper is based mainly on primary data. In this paper availability of kitchen and cooks, regularity in serving mid day meal, quality and quantity of food, children availing MDM according to prescribed norm or not has been gathered. Social equity and supplementary information such as availability of safe drinking water and sanitation, environment, safety and hygiene has been checked and observed carefully. Paper concludes that MDM programme is playing positive role and having a great impact on enrolment, attendance, retrenchment and drop-out of the students in primary and upper primary schools of both the districts. The authors of this paper were involved in this project as project director and research assistant.*

Introduction

The present Mid-day Meal Programme covers all the primary and upper primary schools of the state. The state government has constituted a Mid-day Meal Authority since October, 2006 for the effective implementation of the programme. Under the scheme, boys and girls are provided tasty cooked food during the interval. The provision is to provide food made of rice during four days and food made of wheat during two days in a week. The government of India provides hundred grams (100) per student per day (Wheat/Rice) for primary classes and one hundred fifty grams (150) per student per day in upper primary classes. The government provides Rs. 3.37 per student per day for primary schools and Rs. 5.00 per student per day in upper primary schools in the form of conversation cost. The Food Corporation of India makes the food grain available. The village Pradhan gets the food prepared in kitchen shed in the school premise. Voluntary agencies have also been involved in the preparation of food in urban areas. The government has set the menu and provision of separate kitchen has been made within the school premises. Strict monitoring and inspection mechanisms have been involved for desired and effective implementation of the scheme.

Objectives

The main objectives of this paper are: To examine and assess the role and impact of MDM programme on enhance the enrollment in schools, on grasping power of children by improving the nutrition level, on the tendency to stay in schools especially during interval and on foster the feeling of brotherhood belonging to different religions and castes in two districts of Bihar.

Methodology

The paper is basically based on primary data and information. Well-structured schedule has been prepared for the collection of primary data from selected sampled primary and upper primary schools. For the purpose, a total number of 38 primary schools and 31 upper primary schools

were randomly selected and visited for the study in Muzaffarpur and Sheikhpura districts of Bihar, as decided by the Ministry of HRD. All the consideration were kept in mind during the selection of schools such as high gender gap, high proportion of SC/ST students, low retention and high drop-out rate, minimum of three CWSN and the location of school in a forest or far-flung area, etc. Field survey has been conducted during the period 3rd to 23rd February, 2014.

Sample Design of the Study

To observe the role and impact of Mid-Day-Meal in elementary schools, a total number of 35 schools have been taken as sample from Muzaffarpur district and 34 schools from Sheikhpura district of Bihar as shown in Table-1. Out of these 35 schools, 21 were primary schools and 14 were upper primary schools in Muzaffarpur district and out of these 34 schools, 17 were primary schools, 17 were upper primary schools in Sheikhpura district has been taken.

Table 1 about here Findings

The role and impact of Mid-Day-Meal (MDM) in the two districts of Bihar has been observed by investigating the following activities in 38 primary and 31 upper primary schools:

Food Grain Facility in Schools

Food grain facilities in sample primary and upper primary schools have been checked in both the districts. It has been found that in both types of schools food grain facilities was available and supply of food grain was regular. Delivery of food grain to the lifting agency was also in time. Fair Average Quality (FAQ) of food grain was also found of 'A' grade. Food grains are released to schools after adjusting the unspent balance of the previous month in all primary and upper primary schools.

Release of funds

On the basis of official records it has been observed that

State is releasing fund to district authorities on regular basis in advance. Further district authority is also releasing funds to Blocks and Blocks are releasing funds to Schools on a regular basis in advance. So the flow of funds from State to Schools is absolutely perfect in these districts.

Cooking Cost

It was found that 95.23 percent of primary and 100.00 percent upper primary schools were receiving cooking cost in advance and regularly in Muzaffarpur district except one primary school was waiting to receive cooking cost at the time of our field survey. Cooking cost in Sheikhpura district was found regular in 100 percent of schools. It was also found that in all primaries and upper primary schools, mode of payment of cooking cost was through E-transfer (Table-2).

Table 2 about here

Availability of Kitchen and Kitchen Workers

In 100.00 per cent primary and upper primary schools, appointment of cook-cum-helper were made by School Management Committee (SMC). All primary and upper primary schools were having sufficient cooks as per government norms. Maximum number of cooks were female both in primary and upper primary schools. These cooks were getting fixed salary of Rs.1000 per month through E-transfer regularly. Most of these cooks belong to the social caste of OBC followed by SC, minority and general caste. All these cooks were well trained in cooking. They were trained at BRC by MDM coordinator. Two primary schools in rural area of Muzaffarpur district were not having proper kitchen in schools shown below in picture 1 and 2.

Picturer-1: PS- Bajhila- Muzaffarpur

Picturer-2: PS- Nawada- Muzaffarpur



Regularity in Serving Meal

The students, teachers and parents were asked about the regularity of supply of hot cooked meal in sample primary and upper primary schools of both the districts. The MDM register was also examined in this regard. It became evident from students, teachers, parents and school's register that

MDM supply was regular in 80.95 percent in Muzaffarpur and 94.12 percent in Sheikhpura primary schools respectively and 100.00 percent upper primary schools of both these districts. Table-3 shows the supply of MDM in sample primary and upper primary schools. Due to the shortage of food grains hot cooked meal was not supplied in 4 primary schools of the Muzaffarpur district and in 1 primary school of Sheikhpura in the month of January 2014.

Table 3 about here

Quality and Quantity of Meal

As for as the quality of MDM is concern, it was found either normal or good in all sample primary and upper primary schools of these two districts. Most of these schools are serving MDM in sufficient quantity to each student. The quantity of pulses used in the meal was sufficient. The children of all primary and upper primary schools in both the districts were satisfied with the quality and quantity of mid-day-meal supplied to them.

Children Availing MDM

The number of students of Primary and Upper primary schools availing MDM was counted on the day of our visit in these sample schools. Their number was also verified from the MDM register. It was found that 64.97 per cent student of primary schools in Muzaffarpur and 66.80 per cent student of primary schools in Sheikhpura and 47.84 per cent students of upper primary schools in Muzaffarpur and 48.76 per cent student of upper primary schools in Sheikhpura were found present on the day of our visit to these sample schools. The percentage of students availing MDM as per schools register was 100.00 per cent in primary schools and was 100.00 per cent in upper primary schools. Those students, who were found to be actually availing the MDM on the day of our visit to sample schools, were more than 99.00 percent (Table-4).

Table 4 about here

Social Equity

As far as the social equity was concerned, our research team has found no discrimination on the basis of gender, caste and community in sample primary and upper primary schools. It has been observed that in all primary schools and in all upper primary schools meal has been served either by cook or by helper. In Sheikhpura district, the sitting arrangement for taking mid day meal was in Queue in 29.41 per cent and scattered in 70.59 per cent primary and in Muzaffarpur district it was in Queue in 42.85 per cent primary schools and scattered in 57.15 per cent in primary schools. As for upper primary schools are concern in Sheikhpura district, the sitting arrangement for taking mid day meal was in Queue in 17.65 per cent and scattered in 82.35 per cent schools and in Muzaffarpur district it was in Queue in 42.85 per cent schools and scattered in 57.15 per cent upper primary schools (Table-5).

Table 5 about here

Picture-3: PS Belchi Ariyari- Sheikhpura

Picture-4: MS Tarcha- Sheikhpura





Supplementary Information

As for checking of health condition of children in primary and upper primary schools was concerned, it was found in 71.42 per cent of primary and in 28.58 per cent of upper primary schools of Muzaffarpur district health cards was maintained. Similarly, in Sheikhpura district 88.24 per cent of primary and in 88.24 per cent of upper primary schools health cards was maintained. The frequency of health checking of students was found one time only in most of the primary and upper primary schools. Children were given micronutrient- medicines in 100.00 percent primary and in 100.00 percent upper primary schools. First aid medical kits in all schools were available. The department who administered these medicines was ANM, Health Department and teachers.

Drinking Water and Sanitation

Drinking water and sanitation facility in primary and upper primary schools has also been checked in these two districts. It has found that potable water is available for drinking purpose in more than 90.00 per cent primary and upper primary schools. Water is available through hand pumps-India Marka in all these schools. These hand pumps were installed under the scheme of Public Health Engineering Department (PHED) which provides pure and safe water for drinking purposes. Sanitation was found satisfactory in all sample schools.

Environment, Safety and Hygiene

Environment, safety and hygiene were found to be good or satisfactory in majority of the primary and upper primary schools. The environment was good in 47.06 per cent of primary and 23.53 percent in upper primary schools of Sheikhpura district. Safety was found good in 35.29 per cent in primary and 41.18 percent in upper primary schools. The hygiene was observed to be good in 41.18 per cent primary and 29.41 percent in Upper Primary schools in the district. Similarly, in Muzaffarpur the environment and hygiene was satisfactory in 100.00 per cent of primary and upper primary schools. Safety was found satisfactory in more than 90.00 per cent primary and upper primary schools (Table-6).

Table 6 about here

Checking of Meal before Serving to Students

It has been observed that in all sample primary and upper primary schools, mid day meal has been tasted before serving to students by teachers regularly and some time by School Management Committee (SMC) or by parents.

Impact of MDM

The investigators have observed an impact of MDM on enrollment, attendance and stay of students full time in schools. It has been found by them, that the impact of Mid-Day-Meal on enrollment, attendance,

improvement in general health of students and stay of students full time in school was 100 percent. Due to MDM scheme enrollment improved, attendance of students improved, students were staying in school full time both in primary and upper primary schools (Table-7).

Table 7 about here

Social Harmony

It has been found that mid day meal is improving social harmony among different students of different caste, religion and gender by taking meal together in all primary and upper primary schools of both the districts. MDM is also improving nutritional status of students and their health condition.

Suggestions

On the basis of field survey of primary and upper primary schools where MDM is being implemented, paper gives following suggestions:

- There should be regularity in serving of Mid-Day-Meal in all primary and upper primary schools.
- Regular health check-up is necessary for each child enrolled in school and health care-card must be provided to all students. Health care-card should be maintained.
- All the primary and upper primary schools should maintain buffer stock of food grains in one month advance.
- Education authorities of the district should be prompt to provide the cost of cooking in well advance to all schools.
- Education authorities must assured that food of MDM should always serve according to menu prescribed by the government.
- The quality of food should be improved and MDM should be prepared tasty and delicious.
- All schools where kitchen are not constructed so-far should be provided budget for the kitchen, as few primary and upper primary schools were not yet having kitchens in schools.
- Safety measures were found not up to the mark in around 8 per cent primary and in 10.00 per cent upper primary schools and should be taken care immediately in all schools.
- Impact of MDM on enrollment, attendance and on general health conditions of students was found to be positive but still wide gap existed which needed to be taken care of in the future.

Table- 1: Number of Sample Schools, District Muzaffarpur and Sheikhpura

Sl. No.	Area	Muzaffarpur			Sheikhpura		
		Primary Schools	Upper Primary Schools	Total	Primary Schools	Upper Primary Schools	Total
1	Rural Area	16	11	27	13	13	26
2	Urban Area	5	3	8	4	4	8
	Total	21	14	35	17	17	34

Source: BSA Office, SSA Programme, District Muzaffarpur and Sheikhpura

Table-2: Availability of Cooking Cost

Sl. No.	Particulars	Muzaffarpur District		Sheikhpura District	
		PS	UPS	PS	UPS
1	No. of schools in which cooking cost received in advance and regular	20 (95.23)	14 (100.00)	17 (100.00)	17 (100.00)
2	Cooking cost delayed few days	1(4.76)	-	-	-
3	In case of delay, Teacher manage	1 (100.00)	-	-	-
4	Mode of payment of cooking Cost (E-Transfer)	21 (100.00)	14 (100.00)	17 (100.00)	17 (100.00)
	Total Schools	21 (100.00)	14 (100.00)	17 (100.00)	17 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey, Muzaffarpur and Sheikhpura District.

Table-3: Regularity in Supply of Hot Cooked Meal in MDM

Sl. No.	Particulars PS Yes No	Muzaffarpur District				Sheikhpura District					
		UPS		PS		UPS					
		Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No				
1.	Everyday served Hot Cooked Meal	17 (80.95)	4 (19.05)	14 (100.0)	-	16 (94.12)	1 (5.88)	17 (100.0)	-		
2.	If No, then in three months how much days food not served	1 st Nov.	15-24	-	4(100.0)	-	-	-	-	-	
		2 nd Dec.	8-15	-	1(25.00)	-	-	-	-	-	
			15-24	-	3(75.00)	-	-	-	-	-	
		3 rd Jan.	1-8	-	3(75.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-
			8-15	-	1(25.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-
			15-24	-	-	-	-	-	1 (100.0)	-	-
3.	Reasons for food grains not available in Nov. Dec. Jan.	-	4(100.00)	-	-	-	-	-	-		
	Jan. Position of Head teacher was vacant	-	-	-	-	1(100.0)	-	-	-		
	Total Schools	21(100.00)	14(100.00)	17(100.0)	17(100.0)						

Source: Field Survey, Muzaffarpur and Sheikhpura District.

Table-4: Children Availing MDM on the Day of Visit and as per School Registers

Sl. No.	Particulars	Muzaffarpur District		Sheikhpura District	
		PS	UPS	PS	UPS
1	No. of children enrolled in schools	3688 (100.00)	5293 (100.00)	3280 (100.00)	3105 (100.00)
2	No. of children attending the school on the day of visit	2396 (64.97)	2532 (47.84)	2191 (66.80)	1514 (48.76)
3	No. of children availing MDM as per MDM register	2396 (100.00)	2532 (100.00)	2191 (100.00)	1514 (100.00)
4	No. of children actually availing MDM on the day of visit	2383 (99.45)	2299 (99.43)	2188 (99.86)	1511 (99.80)
	Total Schools	21 (100.00)	14 (100.00)	17 (100.00)	17 (100.00)

Source: Field Survey, Muzaffarpur and Sheikhpura District.

Table-5: Discrimination in cooking, serving and seating arrangement of Students

Sl. No	Particulars	Muzaffarpur District				Sheikhpura District			
		PS		UPS		PS		UPS	
		Seating arrangement in Que	Scattered	Seating arrangement in Que	Scattered	Seating arrangement in Que	Scattered	Seating arrangement in Que	Scattered
1	System of serving and seating arrangement for eating	9 (42.85)	12 (57.15)	6 (42.85)	8 (57.15)	5 (29.41)	12 (70.59)	3 (17.65)	14 (82.35)
2	Observe any gender or caste or community discrimination in cooking or serving or seating arrangement	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
		-	21 (100)	-	14 (100)	-	17 (100)	-	17 (100)
Total Schools		21(100.00)		14(100.00)		17 (100.00)		17 (100.00)	

Source: Field Survey, Muzaffarpur and Sheikhpura District.

Table-6: General Impression of Environment, Safety and Hygiene

Sl No	Particulars	Muzaffarpur					
		PS			UPS		
		Good	Satisfactory	Un-satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory	Un-satisfactory
1	Environment	-	21 (100.00)	-	-	14 (100.00)	
2	Safety	-	19 (90.47)	2 (9.52)	-	13 (92.85)	1 (7.14)
3	Hygiene	-	21 (100.00)	-	-	14 (100.00)	
4	Total Schools	21(100.00)			14(100.00)		
		Sheikhpura					
1	Environment	8 (47.06)	9 (52.94)	-	4 (23.53)	13 (76.47)	-
2	Safety	6 (35.29)	11 (64.71)	-	7 (41.18)	10 (58.82)	-
3	Hygiene	7 (41.18)	10 (58.82)	-	5 (29.41)	12 (70.59)	-
4	Total Schools	17 (100.00)			17 (100.00)		

Source: Field Survey, Muzaffarpur and Sheikhpura District.

Table-7: Impact of the MDM

Sl. No.	Particulars	Muzaffarpur District		Sheikhpura District		
		UPS	PS	UPS	PS	
1	Mid day meal improved	Enrollment of student	21(100.00)	14(100.00)	17(100.00)	17(100.00)
		Attendance of student	21(100.00)	14(100.00)	17(100.00)	17(100.00)
		Present of students full time in school	21(100.00)	14(100.00)	17(100.00)	17(100.00)
2	Total Schools	21(100.00)	14(100.00)	17(100.00)	17(100.00)	

Source: Field Survey, Muzaffarpur and Sheikhpura District.

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